

Remarks/Arguments

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed January 6, 2004. Claims 1-20 are now pending in this case. Claims 1-7 have been rejected. Claims 1, 3 and 5 have herein been amended. Claims 4, 6 and 7 remain unchanged. New Claims 8-20 have herein been added.

Claim 1 has been objected to because of minor informalities. Accordingly, Claim 1 has herein been amended to remove the informalities

Claims 1-7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Drummond (Journal of the American Planning Association article) in view of Yura (US 6,327,373). For the following reasons, the Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed.

A brief overview of Applicants' disclosed address learning method and system is provided herein for ease of understanding. In one general embodiment, Applicant's method and system obtains address information, for example by scanning a mail piece. That address information is compared to information from a delivery point address database to determine the delivery point of the mail piece. Unused or unmatched information from the mail piece address information is sent to a first data base or storage. This information is then analyzed using selection criteria and is prioritized for further

analysis. The unmatched data is then further analyzed, according to priority, to determine the type of data (e.g., person's name, street name, or city, etc.) and is then associated as an alias record with the corresponding data type in the corresponding delivery point address. This alias record is then sent to a data base or storage. The alias records in this data base or storage are further analyzed using promotion criteria to determine whether and when the delivery point address data should be updated with the alias records. Upon meeting threshold criteria, the alias record is updated to an alias table for the corresponding delivery point address data.

The Drummond article, on the other hand, discussed address matching in general as it relates to geographic information systems. The Drummond article does not relate to postal applications and in particular, delivery point address data. The Drummond article, p. 2, defines address matching as "the process of linking records in two databases, based upon street address." The first database is the reference database and the second is the target database. Records in the target database are matched with records in the reference database, and upon finding a match, the record in the target database is assigned geographic coordinates and other locational information from the reference database. While the Drummond article, p. 4, does mention possible use of a U.S. Postal Service database for the reference database, the Drummond article specifically indicates that,

"Unfortunately, they do not contain any geographic or locational information." Further, the Drummond article indicates on pp. 4-5 that "the GIS or matching software should standardize the address elements, drop information that is irrelevant for address matching (such as apartment, floor, and building numbers) and convert addresses to a uniform format." Still further, the Drummond article, p. 5, indicates that if unmatched records remain, they can be interactively matched and edited in order to correct misspellings, expand abbreviations, or delete extraneous information that has prevented a correct match." This is in sharp contrast to Applicant's method and system. The address matching described in the Drummond article is significantly different, both in function and purpose, and is largely non-analogous to Applicant's method and system.

Accordingly, the proposed combination does not make obvious Applicants' Claims 1-7. As discussed above, the Drummond article simply discloses matching records in a target database with records in a reference database, and upon finding a match, the record in the target database is assigned geographic coordinates and other locational information from the reference database. The Drummond article does not disclose a method for learning a delivery point address and updating a database of such delivery point address by using unmatched or unused data, as in Applicants' Claim 1. Further, the Drummond article fails to disclose the step of separating the

matched or used data from the unmatched or unused data, and correlating the unmatched and or unused data to a second set of preexisting data according to a set of predetermined rules, as in Applicant's Claim 1. Still further, the Drummond article fails to disclose the step of updating the database with the unmatched or unused data to allow the correct point of delivery of a second mail piece having similar unmatched or unused data as the first mail piece to be automatically determined, as in Applicant's Claim 1.

Yura is being cited to show the step of obtaining address data from a mail piece using image capture means. However, Yura merely discloses a mail address reading apparatus and mail sorting apparatus. Yura does not relate to learning a delivery point address and updating a database of such delivery point addresses using unmatched or unused data. Yura fails to separate and correlate unmatched or unused data according to a set of predetermined rules. As such, Yura fails to make up for the identified deficiencies of the Drummond article. Accordingly the proposed combination fails to make obvious Applicants' Claim 1.

With respect to Claim 2, the proposed combination fails to disclose separating unused data, and correlating it to the set of preexisting address data according to a third set of predetermined rules, wherein there correct point of delivery of other mail pieces can be automatically determined.

With respect to Claim 4, the proposed combination does not disclose the claimed correlation step.

With respect to independent Claim 5, as discussed above, the Drummond article simply discloses matching records in a target database with records in a reference database, and upon finding a match, the record in the target database is assigned geographic coordinates and other locational information from the reference database. The Drummond article does not disclose a system for learning a delivery point address and updating a database of such delivery point address by using unmatched or unused data, as in Applicants' Claim 5. Further, the Drummond article fails to disclose means for separating matched data from unmatched data or a database comprising the unmatched or unused data, as in Applicant's Claim 5. The Drummond article fails to disclose means for correlating the unmatched or unused data to a set of preexisting data according to a plurality of predetermined rules, as in Applicant's Claim 5. Still further, the Drummond article fails to disclose a learning database comprising information used to determine a delivery point of the mail piece, as in Applicant's Claim 5. For the reasons discussed above, Yura fails to make up for the identified deficiencies of the Drummond article.

Accordingly the proposed combination fails to make obvious Applicants' Claim 5. Specifically, the proposed combination fails to

disclose a system for learning a delivery point address and updating a database of such delivery point addresses using unmatched data; means for separating matched data from unmatched data; a database comprising the unmatched data; means for correlating the unmatched data according to a plurality of predetermined rules; a rules database comprising the plurality of predetermined rules; and a learning database, as in Applicants' Claim 5.

With respect to Claim 7, the proposed combination does not disclose the claimed correlation means.

For the above reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the proposed combination fails to make obvious Applicants' Claims 1-7 as set forth herein, and that those claims are allowable over the cited prior art. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider and remove the above stated rejection.

New Claims 8-19 have been set forth to further particularly point out and distinctly claim Applicants' method of weighing mail pieces. Specifically, Claim 8 claims a method of associating unmatched address data with preexisting delivery point address data, the method comprising the steps of identifying unmatched address data which differs from the preexisting delivery point address data, analyzing the unmatched data; and associating the unmatched data with the pre-existing delivery point address data. Claim 9 further claims the step of updating the preexisting delivery point address data with

the unmatched data when the unmatched data meets criteria for promotion. Claim 10 claims that the step of identifying unmatched data comprises obtaining address data, and comparing the address data with the pre-existing delivery point address data. Claim 11 claims that the address data is obtained from mail pieces. Claim, 12 claims that the address data is obtained from the Internet. Claim 13 claims that the step of analyzing the unmatched data comprises identifying a data type for the unmatched data, and identifying the corresponding data for that data type in the pre-existing delivery point address data. Claim 14 claims that the step of associating the unmatched data comprises creating an alias record correlating the unmatched data to corresponding data in the preexisting delivery point address data. Claims 15 claims that the step of updating the preexisting delivery point address data comprises adding an alias record to a corresponding alias table associated with the preexisting delivery point address data. Claim 16 claims that the criteria for promotion includes a threshold number of uses of the alias record. Claim 17 claims that the step of updating the preexisting delivery point address data comprises adding a new delivery point address to the preexisting delivery point address data in the event that the unmatched data does not correspond to an existing delivery point address. Claim 18 further claims the step of selectively removing from the preexisting delivery point address data the unmatched data

when the unmatched data meets criteria for demotion. Claim 19 further claims the step of prioritizing the unmatched data according to selection criteria prior to analyzing the unmatched data.

Claim 20 claims a system for associating unmatched address data with preexisting delivery point address data, the system comprising means for identifying unmatched address data which differs from the preexisting delivery point address data, means for analyzing the unmatched data, means for associating the unmatched data with the pre-existing delivery point address data, and means for updating the preexisting delivery point address data with the unmatched data when the unmatched data meets criteria for promotion.

For the reasons discussed above with respect to the Drummond article and Yura, the proposed combination fails to make obvious Applicants' new claims 8-20. For example, the proposed combination fails to teach a method of associating unmatched address data with preexisting delivery point address data, comprising the steps of identifying unmatched address data which differs from the preexisting delivery point address data, analyzing the unmatched data, and associating the unmatched data with the pre-existing delivery point address data, as in Applicants' Claim 8. The proposed combination further fails to teach the step of updating the preexisting delivery point address data with the unmatched data when the unmatched data meets criteria for promotion, as in Applicants' Claim 9. With

respect to Claim 13, the proposed combination fails to teach that the step of analyzing the unmatched data comprises identifying a data type for the unmatched data, and identifying the corresponding data for that data type in the pre-existing delivery point address data.

With respect to Claims 14-16, the proposed combination fails to teach that the step of associating the unmatched data comprises creating an alias record correlating the unmatched data to corresponding data in the preexisting delivery point address data, that the step of updating the preexisting delivery point address data comprises adding an alias record to a corresponding alias table associated with the preexisting delivery point address data, and that the criteria for promotion includes a threshold number of uses of the alias record. While the Drummond article, p. 9, does discuss in general the use of an "alias database ... so that the most common forms of misspecified addresses can be translated directly into their correct, standard equivalents." However, the Drummond article does not teach, suggest or disclose how this "alias database" is constructed or how it functions, and it may simply equate to a spell-check type of system. In any event, the proposed combination clearly does not teach, disclose, suggest or make obvious the specific steps or elements of Applicants' Claims 14-16.

With respect to Claim 17, the proposed combination fails to teach that the step of updating the preexisting delivery point

address data comprises adding a new delivery point address to the preexisting delivery point address data in the event that the unmatched data does not correspond to an existing delivery point address. With respect to Claim 18, the proposed combination fails to teach the step of selectively removing from the preexisting delivery point address data the unmatched data when the unmatched data meets criteria for demotion. With respect to Claim 19, the proposed combination fails to teach the step of prioritizing the unmatched data according to selection criteria prior to analyzing the unmatched data.

Additionally, the proposed combination fails to teach a system for associating unmatched address data with preexisting delivery point address data, the system comprising means for identifying unmatched address data which differs from the preexisting delivery point address data, means for analyzing the unmatched data, means for associating the unmatched data with the pre-existing delivery point address data, and means for updating the preexisting delivery point address data with the unmatched data when the unmatched data meets criteria for promotion, as in Applicants' Claim 20.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the prior art of record, either alone or in combination, fairly teaches, suggests or discloses the novel and unobvious features of Applicants' claims. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that the claims as

presented herein are now in condition for allowance. An early notice allowance is respectfully requested.

Any arguments of the Examiner not specifically addressed should not be deemed admitted, conceded, waived, or acquiesced by Applicants. Any additional or outstanding matters the Examiner may have are respectfully requested to be disposed of by telephoning the undersigned.

A Petition for an Extension of Time is enclosed along with a form PTO-2038 authorizing a credit card charge to cover the extension fee, as well as the fee for one independent claim in excess of three.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required, including if necessary the above fees if there is any problem with the credit card charge, to Deposit Account No. 16-0657.

A postcard is enclosed evidencing receipt of the same.

Respectfully submitted,

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